

REPORT OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG
FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 1937
ON THE TRAFFIC IN
PREPARED OPIUM.



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G.

Medical Services.

Opium addicts were treated as in previous years at the Government Civil Hospital, replaced in the latter half of 1937 by the Queen Mary Hospital, and at the Tung Wah Eastern Chinese Hospital.

Eighteen patients, all Chinese, were cared for in the Government institutions coming under the supervision of Prof. W. I. Gerrard, O.B.E., of the University Medical Unit.

Four hundred and thirty were treated in the Tung Wah Eastern Hospital by Chinese western-trained graduates under the general supervision of a Government Visiting Medical Officer.

Of those in the Government hospitals, nine were relieved, six remained unchanged, two left within twenty-four hours of admission and one was still under treatment at the end of 1937.

The average number of days in hospital amounted to twenty-seven, the longest stay being sixty-five days and the shortest one day.

Seventeen of the eighteen cases were of the mild type. The patients belonged to the labouring class able to spend about 50 cents, or 7½d. per day on the drug and it is doubtful if the degree of their addiction was in itself a serious matter. The majority were found to be suffering from some definite physical ailment which had constituted the original reason for taking the drug.

Professor Gerrard was able to satisfy himself of the deleterious effects of the habit on gastric function.

Treatment consisted of the complete and immediate withdrawal of opium followed by Mollino's auto-serotherapy.

The Professor of Medicine has expressed the opinion that the influence of this form of treatment is mainly psychological. He has not experienced the wonderful results reported by some observers, and suggests that the relief of ailments removed the need for the drug.

prepared opium seized, experience having shown that certain types or brands of packing are intended for certain definite markets. There is no doubt that the illicit export traffic is highly organised and has ample financial backing to meet all calls. During the year a few cases of smuggling specially dried prepared opium in postal packets were detected—these were reported to the authorities in the countries to which the packets seized were addressed.

(4) The preventive staff consists of 4 executive and 20 European preventive officers, 108 Chinese preventive officers and 8 Chinese female searchers. Information was regularly forwarded to the Government or departments concerned elsewhere.

(5) In the course of the year there were 405 seizures involving 3,936,230 diacetylmorphine pills (see special remarks under this head in the raw opium and dangerous drug reports).

(6) A table showing the prices at which Government Opium was sold is given in Appendix II; these remain unchanged from last year. In the early part of the year the sales of the Singapore blend fell to a record low level but after the outbreak of hostilities in China there was a marked recovery due probably to the large influx of refugees and to the difficulty of obtaining supplies from other sources. The Kam Shan opium is the special luxury type prepared and packed prior to January, 1938, and stores are gradually becoming exhausted. It is sold only to registered and rationed smokers, the number of whom is steadily decreasing owing to deaths and departures from the Colony. The register of smokers has been closed for some years, and at the end of the year included 65 names. These smokers in 1937 paid H.K.\$94,080 or 29.6% of the gross opium revenue for the opium which they purchased.

(7) For the year under review the special opium account shows a loss of H.K.\$355,607.60. This figure is higher than that for 1936 owing to the special Singapore transfer or credit made in that year. The Colony owing to its geographical position on arterial steamship lines and to the fact that it is a terminal or home port for many steamship lines of international transport is the centre of highly organised international traffic in opium (and to a lesser extent in drugs) and the cost of fighting this traffic is an all too severe drain on the local domestic resources.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON DRUG ADDICTION.

1.—*Extent of Addiction.*

1. It is impossible to give the approximate number of addicts in Hong Kong. Form V in this report gives the number of rationed and non-rationed smokers as 1,744. The estimate of

the number of illicit opium divans cannot be less than 2,000, in many of which diacetylmorphine pills will also be available, and a divan cannot exist on less than 20 smokers per day. This gives a total of 40,000 addicts for opium alone and omits all smokers of illicit opium who smoke in their own homes. A heroin addict will consume from 5 to 40 pills per day, and 10 may be taken as the average. The estimated number of divans where heroin only is smoked is 800, and the number of divans for both heroin and opium smoking may be placed at the same figure. The former class of divan averages 20 pill smokers per day and the latter 10, so that the number of heroin addicts may be placed at 24,000 with a daily consumption of 240,000 pills. Officers who have been engaged on special pill investigations report that among these addicts a number of females are found.

2. Number of addicts who obtain their supply:—

(a) From legitimate sources:— 1,744.

(b) From illicit sources:—please see reply to 1 above.

3. Methods employed to ascertain the approximate number of addicts:—please see reply to 1 above.

II.—ADDICTION AND THE PROFESSIONS.

1. Total number of:—

(a) Medical Practitioners	287
(b) Dentists	28
(c) Chemists & Druggists	31
(d) Veterinary Surgeons	7

2. The number of known addicts in each of the above classes:—

- (a) One
- (b) Nil
- (c) Nil
- (d) Nil

N.B.—There is a large number of native unregistered doctors who practise Chinese Medicine. Some of these are undoubtedly opium addicts.

3. The number of each of the above classes convicted of violation of the narcotic laws. Nil.

Opium Purchases.

Raw Opium	Nil	
Prepared Opium	Nil	
Transport Charges, etc., to and from Singapore	\$20,145.54	
Opium. Incidental Expenses.	15.68	
		\$20,161.22

Monopoly Expenses.

Expenses chargeable in full to Opium	20,428.80	
Transport in connection with Shops	452.00	
Opium Rewards (total includ- ing payments to Police) ...	34,750.00	
<i>Overhead Expenses partially chargeable to Opium.</i>		
Personal Emoluments:—		
40% of total expenditure on Personal Emoluments of Imports & Exports Dept.	145,535.93	
15% on above for expendi- ture on Passages and Pensions	21,830.39	

Launches:—

50% of the running ex- penses of the three Revenue Launches of Imports & Exports De- partment	9,479.45	
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Other Charges:—

40% of miscellaneous charges	6,522.84	
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238,999.41

PORTION OF THE EXPENSES OF
THE GENERAL SERVICES
CHARGEABLE TO OPIUM.

Prisons.

Expenditure chargeable in full to Opium:—		
Cost of maintenance of opium prisoners	12,826.61	

*Overhead Expenses partially
chargeable to Opium:—**Personal Emoluments—*

21% of total expenditure of

the Department for 1927 107,521.42

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Gross Proceeds from Sale of Opium ...	\$ 317,769.60
Total value of Opium seized and dis- posed of other than by destruction.	Nil
Proceeds of Fines and Forfeitures	14,877.56
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	332,647.16
Deficit	355,607.60

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Form I.

PREPARED OPIUM MANUFACTURED DURING THE YEAR 1937.

1	2
name or brand under which the prepared opium is sold	Quantities manufactured
Nil.	Nil.

Total:— Nil.

Form II.

QUANTITIES OF RAW & PREPARED OPIUM USED IN THE
MANUFACTURE OF PREPARED OPIUM
DURING THE YEAR 1937.

1	2	3	4	5
Quantities of Raw Opium employed derived from			Total Quantities of Raw Opium used	Prepared Opium used (seized or remanufactured)
Home Produce	Imports	Seizures		
Kg.	Kg.	Kg.	Kg.	Kg.
No Government manufacture in the territory.				

Form III.

CONSUMPTION OF PREPARED OPIUM DURING THE YEAR 1937.

1	2	3
Name or brand under which the prepared Opium was sold	Quantities consumed by Smokers	
	Rationed	Non-rationed
	Kg.	Kg.
1. Kam Shan	134	—
2. Singapore	—	706

Total:— 840 Kgs.

Form IV.

STOCKS OF PREPARED OPIUM.

Amount of stocks held by the Government on 31st Dec., 1937.

In Government Strong Room 1,431 Kgs.

This included 204 Kilos of Singapore Prepared Opium, 904 Kilos of Kam Shan Prepared Opium and 323 Kilos of Confiscated Prepared Opium.

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Form V.

NUMBER AND NATIONALITY OF SMOKERS AND RATE OF CONSUMPTION.

1	2	3	4	5
Nationality	Rationed	Non-rationed	Estimated population of each nationality	Consumption per head of estimated population of each nationality
Chinese	65	1,679 (1)	987,745	Infinitesimal (2)

- (1) i.e., smokers of Government Opium as ascertained by a census of customers at Government shops and licensed retailers taken during 3 consecutive days in December.
- (2) i.e., consumption of Government opium. No accurate data are available regarding consumption of illicit opium; but some idea of its extent can be derived from the figure given under Head IV (3) and in Appendix I.

Form VI.

NUMBER OF RETAIL SHOPS.

Owned by the Government.		Licensed by the Government	
1	2	3	4
Opened during the year	In existence on 31st December	Opened during the year	In existence on 31st December
Nil	13	Nil	11

Form VII.

NUMBER OF SMOKING ESTABLISHMENTS.

Government Establishments		Licensed Establishments	
1	2	3	4
Opened during the year	In existence on 31st December	Opened during the year	In existence on 31st December

No Government or licensed smoking establishments.

Form VIII.

DROSS.

Stocks of dross held by the Government on 1st Jan., 1937	Nil.
Quantities of dross collected or purchased by the Government during the year 1937	Nil.
Quantities of dross seized during the year	2 Kg.
Stocks of dross held by the Government on 31st Dec., 1937	Nil.
Average price paid by the Government for dross purchased	No purchase made.

Note:—All opium dross seized was destroyed.

Form IX.

SEIZURES OF RAW AND PREPARED OPIUM DURING THE YEAR 1937.

Total Quantity Seized.	
Raw Opium	Prepared Opium
Kg.	Kg.
877 (1)	1,211

(1) Of this 648 Kg. were Raw Chinese Opium and 228 Kg. were Raw Iranian Opium.

Appendix IA.

MAJOR SEIZURES OF RAW OPIUM DURING THE YEAR 1937.

Place of Seizure	Kind of Opium.	Taels	Destination Indicated by Circumstances of Seizure
Hillside above Deep Water Bay	Chinese Raw	900	Hong Kong
Boat 60P, Tsun Wan.	Iranian Raw	1,440	For export
S.S. Wing Wah, Victoria Harbour...	Chinese Raw	2,240	Hong Kong
Deep Bay, Hong Kong	Chinese Raw	1,800	Hong Kong
Road-side, Aberdeen, Hong Kong	Chinese Raw	1,630	Hong Kong
Junk 4303, Victoria Harbour	Chinese Raw	780	Hong Kong
87 Bonham Road	Chinese Raw	735	Hong Kong
Sea shore, Aplichau Island	Iranian Raw	960	Hong Kong
Sea Shore Aplichau Island	Chinese Raw	650	Hong Kong
Sea bed, Lamma Island	Chinese Raw	4,040	Hong Kong
Sea bed, Lamma Island	Iranian Raw	1,200	Hong Kong